

**13th Annual Report of the
Department of Playgrounds
District of Columbia
1924**

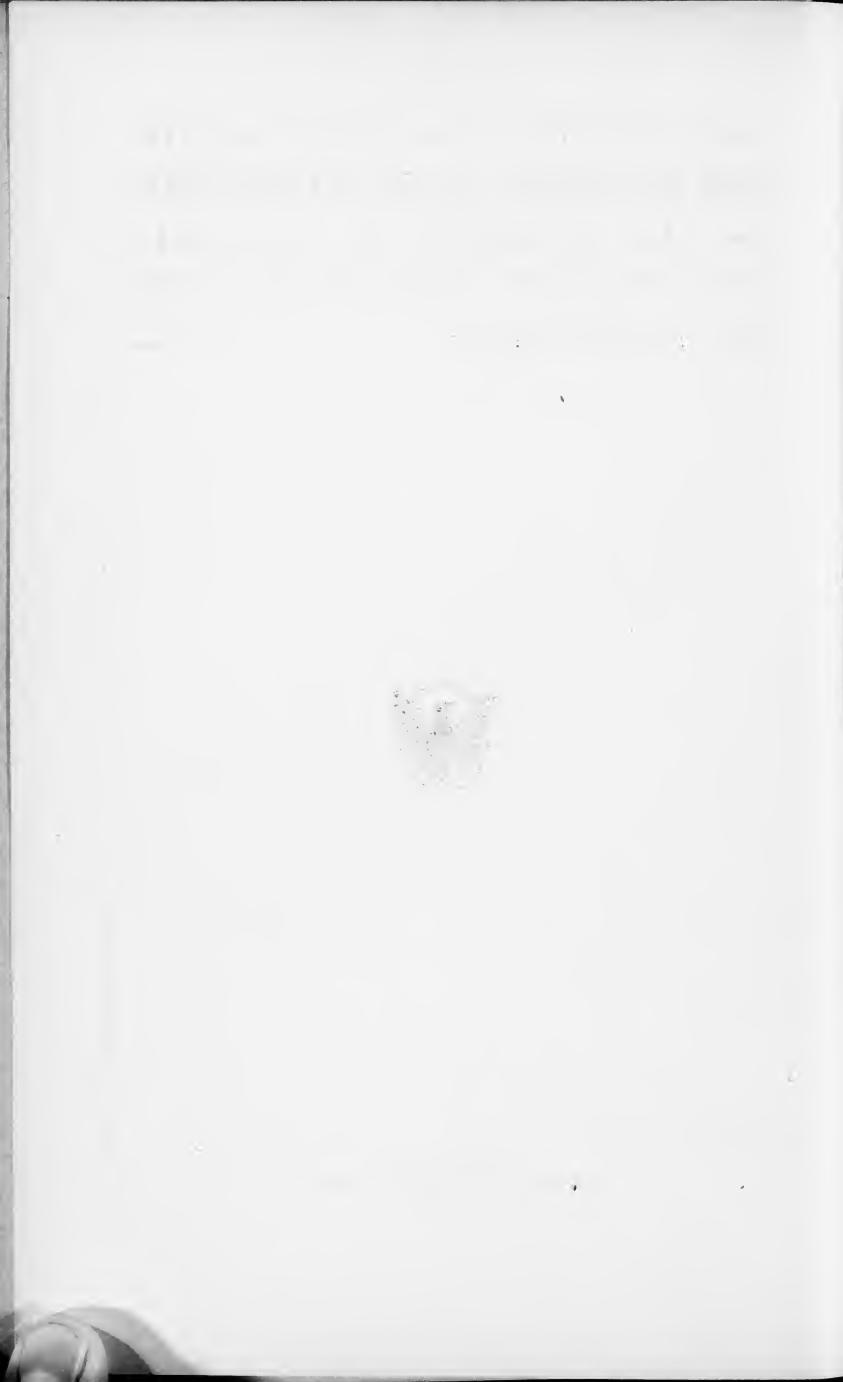


THIRTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
DEPARTMENT *of* PLAYGROUNDS
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 1924

MRS. SUSIE ROOT RHODES - - - - Supervisor



WASHINGTON
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THIRTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLAYGROUNDS, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WASHINGTON, D. C., *September 1, 1924.*

To the COMMISSIONERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:

GENTLEMEN: The supervisor of playgrounds presents herewith her ninth report, which is the thirteenth annual report of the department of playgrounds. This report covers the period from July 1, 1923, to June 30, 1924.

The health, happiness, and well-being of every child depends on the foresight which a city uses in providing a well-organized and adequate play system. Washington people should be happy because of all that is now being done to develop recreational facilities in the District.

This year to a greater extent than last new playgrounds have replaced the old. The old lock-up school yards, vacant lots, back yards with their weeds and rubbish have become new playgrounds, with supervision for the children of Washington through the municipal playground department under the supervision of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia.

Municipal athletics and playground sports are developing rapidly after years of slow growth. The form of administration, which was in operation in the District some time before the present supervisor came into office, is the finest in the country. As soon as our playgrounds are equipped, as was originally intended, with field houses so there may be supervised year-round activities, then the municipal recreation system here will have reached the standard of efficiency so earnestly desired by its founders. In the children's bureau report on playground facilities in the District of Columbia emphasis is placed on the need of field houses, lighting of the grounds, and 12 months supervision—exactly in accord with the original playground plan for the District that was so heartily commended by President Roosevelt.

Field houses should be constructed that are attractive, and the buildings should be of such size as to provide generous accommodations, office for the director, and one or more indoor recreation rooms to be used in extremely hot, cold, or stormy weather. In the best type of field house, shower baths, dressing rooms, and lockers are included. At present, with the exception of Georgetown and Rosedale, the shelters on the playgrounds of the District are not attractive nor comfortable. The lodges constructed by the Federal Government on Garfield and Willow Tree are pleasing in appearance and generally satisfactory. These should have a larger general playroom for indoor use.

The large playgrounds should be lighted at night. If lighted, they can be in use until 9.30 in the evening and so could meet the needs of younger working people, hundreds of whom are just in their teens.

The playground department will never reach its highest point of efficiency until the year-round supervision is brought about. At present playgrounds are open for 12 months, but they are supervised only 10 months. During January and February children need guidance. Year-round supervision in playground service is necessary, since mischief and juvenile delinquency are not peculiar to any one season of the year. This condition has become recognized by our citizens generally and the remedy is, we hope, near at hand. Increased opportunity for occupational play and industrial recreation must go hand in hand with the restriction of child labor.

The facilities for active recreation in our Federal parks and public school yards, in addition to those of the municipal department, were used very extensively. This has been the most successful year the playground department has ever experienced. Few cities in the country carry on as diversified a program. All our grounds are used to the fullest capacity. This does not mean, however, that the playgrounds are crowded at every hour of every day, for there is always a rising and falling tide of the children. It does mean that the average attendance taxes every resource of those in charge of the ground. The need of more play fields is apparent.

We have not generous equipment on our grounds, but what we have is well chosen, well set, and very attractive to the children. A good supply of material is very necessary and helps to keep the children busy and happy.

Instruction is given in many kinds of handwork. In our occupational play the children are taught the things that most interest them—needlework; embroidery; crochet; tatting; knitting; machine sewing; jig sawing; flower making; paper cutting; the making of small garments; basketry of various sorts of reed, raffia, and splints; chair caning; and rug weaving.

We are very enthusiastic about mass-play games. There is much free play, and quiet games; there are tennis tournaments, tin-can golf, kite tournaments, roller-skating contests, quoit pitching, and the athletic badge test for boys and girls. Track and field events and the marble tournaments on each ground are of great interest.

The aim of the playground department is to provide for the children and youth an opportunity for fun and for physical improvement. It encourages and promotes beneficial sports and games. Habits of justice, obedience, industry, loyalty, and cooperation are taught. Strict adherence to the rules of the games teach respect for law. Civic pride and a regard for property rights are other valuable outgrowths of the public playgrounds. All of our playgrounds are supervised by a director, and the larger ones have in addition at times two or three play leaders.

It was in the Nation's Capital that women were first permitted to become directors of playgrounds. When, in 1916, the District Commissioners appointed a woman as executive head of a municipal department, it was as supervisor of the department of playgrounds.

Washington was then the first city in the United States to place a woman in charge of its municipal recreation. The trend since

then has been, the United States over, the filling of the highest recreation positions by women, until now there are women superintendents planning the recreation and directing the staff of play leaders in a half hundred cities.

The shaping of Washington's play life is of interest to-day to most men's clubs of the city, as the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, Board of Trade, Federation of Citizens' Associations, etc. The women's clubs of the city, as League of American Pen Women, College Women's Club, Women's City Club, etc., are also showing special interest. This interest from our friends on all sides, and the support of our daily press, all have worked together this year to put across a "play movement" here worth while.

The Rotary Club of Washington, composed of many progressive, influential business men, took an unusual interest in the playground work and contributed \$1,348 to keep open school playgrounds with supervision after school and Saturdays during the fall and spring months.

Through the kindness and interest of Mr. Harry M. Crandall, of the Crandall Theaters (Inc.), and their educational and public service director, Mrs. Harriet Hawley Locher, the playground department received salary for one play leader on each playground nearest the six Crandall theaters for the summer months, amounting in all to \$900.

The Catholic University has recognized the worth of this department by giving credits in sociology on a master's degree for certain work done on our playgrounds and under our supervision the past year.

Our effort has not been greater to secure more playground and recreation centers than to study and promote playground efficiency, to encourage outdoor life and appreciation of the natural beauties in and around Washington.

Last spring as usual there was a training class for recreation workers from March 15 to June 30. All who apply for positions on the playgrounds in the District who are without playground experience are put into an apprentice class, where the usual program of games, sports, and handwork are taught before the applicant may be appointed to a position in the department.

Special attention has been given to the surfacing, grading, and drainage of our grounds, and 250 shade trees have been planted.

In addition to the 25 municipal playgrounds, there were 4 play stations in operation, 33 school yards were open with supervision during the summer vacation, and 8 of the larger school yards were opened with supervision during the fall and spring terms daily after school, Saturdays, and vacation days.

The daily schedule while school is in session is from 11.45 until dusk. On Saturdays and holidays the playgrounds are open from 9 a. m. until 4.30 p. m., and during summer vacation from 9 in the morning until dusk. Visits to the grounds during the year totaled nearly 3,000,000, with 20,000 in average daily attendance.

Three new grounds were opened during the year:

Wm. S. Phillips.—Located between Eighth, Ninth, Longfellow, and Madison Streets, NW. This ground was given to the District for a playground by Wm. S. Phillips. It was opened in August 1923.

Van Ness.—Located at Third and M Streets, SE., adjoins the Van Ness School yard, and was acquired by loan through the courtesy of the Catholic Big Sisters. Opened October 1, 1923.

Chevy Chase.—Located at Forty-first and Livingston Streets, NW. This ground was loaned by the Chevy Chase Recreation Club. Opened July, 1923.

Municipal playgrounds

WHITE

Bloomingdale.....	First and Bryant Sts. NW.
Columbia Heights.....	Columbia Road NW. between Georgia and Sherman Aves.
Chevy Chase.....	Livingstone St. between Forty-first and Forty-second Sts. NW.
Gallinger.....	F St. NW. between Twenty-first and Twenty-second Sts.
Garfield Park.....	Second and F Sts. SE.
Georgetown.....	Thirty-third and Volta Place NW.
Mary Gwynn Nursery.....	2100 G St. NW.
Happy Hollow.....	Eighteenth St. and Kalorama Road NW.
Hoover.....	Second and N Sts. SW.
Iowa Avenue.....	Iowa Ave. NW. between Varnum and Webster Sts.
Lois Marshall Nursery.....	Children's Hospital.
Mitchell Park.....	Twenty-third and S Sts. NW.
Montrose Park.....	Thirtieth and R Sts. NW.
New Hampshire Avenue ¹	New Hampshire Ave. between L and M Sts. NW.
New York Avenue.....	First St. and New York Ave. NW.
Park View.....	Warder and Otis Sts. NW.
Plaza.....	Second and E Sts. NE.
Wm. S. Phillips.....	Eighth, Ninth, Longfellow, and Madison Sts. NW.
Rosedale.....	Seventeenth and Kramer Sts. NE.
Trinity Community House.....	Third and C Sts. NW.
Twin Oaks.....	Fourteenth and Taylor Sts. NW.
Van Ness.....	Third and M Sts. SE.
Virginia Avenue.....	Virginia Ave. SE. between Ninth and Eleventh Sts.

COLORED

Cardozo.....	First and I Sts. SW.
Howard.....	Fifth and W Sts. NW.
Logan.....	Third and G Sts. NE.
Phillips.....	Twenty-seventh and N Sts. NW.
Payne.....	Fifteenth and C Sts. SE.
Trinidad ¹	Between Bladensburg Ave. and Trinidad Ave. NE.
Warfield Nursery.....	Fifth and Bryant Sts. NW.
Willow Tree.....	Third, Four-and-a-half, B, and C Sts. NW.

School yards open during the summer, 1923

WHITE

Adams.....	Seventeenth and R Sts. NW.
Arthur.....	First St. and Arthur Place NW.
S. J. Bowen.....	Third and K Sts. SW.
Brookland.....	Tenth and Monroe Sts. NE.
Burroughs.....	Eighteenth and Monroe Sts. NE.
Buchanan.....	E St. SE. between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Sts.

¹ Private grounds; withdrawn December, 1923.

Cooke.....	Seventeenth and Euclid Sts. NW.
Coreoran.....	Twenty-eighth and M Sts. NW.
Dennison.....	S St. NW. between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Sts.
Eaton.....	Thirty-fourth and Lowell Sts. NW.
Emery.....	Lincoln Road and Prospect St. NE.
Fairbrother.....	Tenth and E Sts. SW.
Hayes.....	Fifth and K Sts. NE.
Jefferson.....	Sixth and D Sts. SW.
Monroe School.....	Columbia Road, between Georgia and Sherman Aves. NW.
Johnson-Powell.....	Park Road and Hyatt Place NW.
Henry-Polk.....	Seventh and O Sts. NW.
Ross.....	Eleventh and Harvard Sts. NW.
Seaton.....	I St. NW., between Second and Third Sts. NW.
Takoma Park.....	Dahlia St., Takoma Park.
Van Ness.....	Fourth and M Sts. SE.
Wallach-Towers.....	Eighth St. and Pennsylvania Ave. SE.

COLORED

Anthony Bowen.....	Ninth and D Sts. SW.
Burrville.....	Burrville, D. C.
Briggs.....	Twenty-second St. and Virginia Ave. NW.
Birney.....	Nichols Ave., Anacostia, D. C.
Bruce.....	Kenyon St. NW., between Georgia and Sherman Aves.
Deanwood.....	Deanwood, D. C.
Giddings.....	Third and G Sts. NE.
Payne.....	Fifteenth and C Sts. SE.
Magruder.....	Seventeenth and M Sts. NW.
Slater-Langston.....	North Capitol and P Sts.

School yards open daily, after school hours, during the spring and fall terms

WHITE

Adams.....	Seventeenth St. and New Hampshire Ave. NW.
Cooke.....	Seventeenth and Euclid Sts. NW.
Coreoran.....	Twenty-eighth and M Sts. NW.
Jefferson.....	Sixth and D Sts. SW.
Johnson-Powell.....	Park Road and Hyatt Place NW.

COLORED

Briggs.....	Twenty-second St. and Virginia Ave. NW.
Burrville.....	Burrville, D. C.
Giddings.....	Third and G Sts. SE.
Phelps.....	Vermont Ave. and T St. NW.

PLAN FOR ORGANIZATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL ATHLETICS

For athletic purposes the public schools have been grouped into divisions, each having as a center a municipal playground. Each school of a division is invited to enter a team in baseball and soccer for boys, and one in basket ball, tennis, and schlag for girls, which may compete for the division championship trophy which is presented to the winning team of each division. The team winning the trophy may keep it for a year and may have the name of the school it represents engraved upon it. In case any school should win this trophy for three years in succession it may keep the trophy permanently. The playground director is the coach and referee, and

it is for the city championship games only that the boys have to leave their own neighborhood. After the division championships have been determined these several champion teams compete for the city championship.

SUMMER BASEBALL

Baseball continues to be the most popular sport for boys on the playgrounds. During the past season the game was played in every form from "one-knocker" to organized leagues.

The big baseball feature of the year in Washington is the annual "sandlot series" composed of the independent teams of the city ranging from unlimited teams, over 21 years of age, to the midget clubs, 13 years of age and under. The leagues are conducted by a sandlot commission elected by the various clubs. The playground department, feeling that the midgets were too young to shift for themselves in a series of this kind, collaborated with the sandlot commission in conducting their games. About 300 boys and 10 teams entered the small boys league. The teams were divided into two sections, A and B, the Southend team winning in section A and Mount Rainier Emblems in B section. The Southend boys won the title by defeating the Emblems in the playoff, 2 games to 1.

All of the midget games were played on the Plaza and Rosedale playgrounds. Each evening large crowds viewed the "kid games" and complimented the department on the success of the series.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BASEBALL

The spring baseball series for the elementary schools conducted by the department was handled in the same manner as in previous years. One more division was added, making 12 playground divisions now having school games.

One feature worth mentioning is the number of people attending the juvenile league games. Grown-ups are taking a lively interest in the sports of their boys, and during the past spring fathers, and mothers too, turned out in large numbers to see if "Johnny" could do all that he claimed he could with a baseball. The annual graded school baseball tournament is now recognized by sporting critics as an important event. The newspapers give a great deal of space to reports of the games and this has helped not a little.

Monroe School won the western section title and Lenox got the verdict in the east. The city championship games were played on Plaza playground before several thousand spectators. Monroe took two straight games to win the city crown. Both games were exceptionally well played, the first going 10 innings before Lenox went down to defeat, 5 to 4. In the second game Lenox led all the way to the eighth inning, when Monroe staged an old-time rally and shoved over 6 runs. The final score was 6 to 5.

Division	Number of schools	Champion
Bloomingtondale.....	7	Brightwood Park.
Columbia Heights ¹	11	Monroe. ¹
Garfield.....	4	Jefferson.
Georgetown.....	13	Curtis-Hyde.
New York Avenue.....	5	Abbot-Twining.
Plaza.....	7	Blair-Hayes.
Rosedale.....	8	Blow.
Virginia.....	8	Lenox.
	63	

¹ City championship won by Monroe of the Columbia Heights division.

SPRING ATHLETIC MEET

With visions of the star athletes soon to represent their country in the Olympic games before them, the graded-school boys went at their annual track meet with more enthusiasm than ever before. Reading the newspaper accounts of the college stars striving for places on the American team played no small part in the success of the schoolboy games. They were impressed by reading that clean living was an essential part of the star athletes' training, because this was the same thing that the playground director had always told them. Consequently the consumption of candy and cake was lessened, and mothers had no trouble in getting their boys to retire early. For if they did not do these things how could they become like Paddock, LeGendre, and other nationally known field and track stars?

Eight divisions competed in spirited elimination meets before the day set for the championship events, June 14. And as a climax to a series of successful meets a new track champion was crowned, marking the first time Ross school had been humbled in nine years of competition. The athletes from Monroe School made it a 100 per cent year by taking the city meet with 331½ points. Peabody School was right at their heels, with 29, and the dethroned champions, Ross, ran third with 24 points. Other teams that scored points were: Powell, 23; Adams, 12; Force, 11; Thomson, 9; Seaton, 8; Maury, 7; Cooke, 6; Brightwood Park, 5; and Brent, 1½. Boys from 42 schools qualified for the finals out of 69 schools competing in the semifinal games.

Division meet, 1924

Playground division	Number of schools	Champion
Bloomingtondale.....	6	Brookland.
Columbia Heights.....	11	Johnson-Powell.
Garfield.....	5	Brent.
Georgetown.....	12	Adams.
New York Avenue.....	6	Thomson.
Rosedale.....	11	Maury.
Plaza.....	8	Peabody.
Virginia Avenue.....	6	Buchanan.

SOCCER BALL

Soccer ball is rapidly increasing in popularity among the playground boys, and they have at last interested their older brothers in the game. Until very recently interest in soccer in Washington was confined strictly to the playgrounds. But due to the great elementary school series conducted each fall, and the department's capable soccer instructors who have persisted in the face of much opposition in promoting the game, a city-wide interest has started that will ultimately make soccer one of the leading fall and winter sports in the Capital.

The annual elementary school soccer series conducted by the playground department aroused the interest of the whole city. Despite the fact that many of the schools that participated in the series last year are now junior high or a junior high in the neighborhood has taken the seventh and eighth grades from them, 61 schools and 1,400 boys took part in the series. To give an idea of how closely contested the division games were, mention is made that a playoff was necessary in three of the divisions after the regular season to break ties.

For the third consecutive time Monroe won the western section title and Pierce School the eastern section. And in the city championship series between these teams history repeated itself once more. The series, originally intended to be a "best two out of three" tourney, went 5 games, the same number played last year.

The first game ended a scoreless tie after the regular time and two extra periods had been played. The second was won by Monroe, 1 to 0, the third, an extra period 1 to 1 tie; the fourth, another extra period scoreless tie; and the fifth was won by Monroe, 1 to 0.

By winning the championship for three consecutive years Monroe gets permanent possession of the trophy awarded by the playground department.

Division	Schools	Champion
Bloomington	7	Brightwood Park
Columbia Heights ¹	8	Monroe.
Garfield	6	Brent.
Georgetown	12	Curtis-Hyde.
New York Avenue	5	Abbot.
Plaza	8	Carbery.
Rosedale	9	Pierce.
Virginia Avenue	6	Buchanan.
	61	

¹ City Champion Monroe, 1923.

TRACK MEETS ON COLORED GROUNDS

Field and track events were a feature of the past summer's work on colored grounds. Several of the grounds conducted weekly meets as a means of training for the big event held just before the opening of school. The big meet was the talk of the grounds weeks before the date set for it. In many cases the talk among the youngsters reached the ears of their parents, and when the big day came the

ground was thronged with enthusiastic parents shouting words of encouragement.

At least one of the directors had the happy thought to stage an impromptu meet for the parents. Aside from the regular field and track events, three-legged and obstacle races afforded a great deal of amusement for the grown playgroundites.

BASEBALL ON COLORED GROUNDS

The playground department continues to shoulder the entire responsibility for colored baseball in the District. The department enjoys this distinction, but regrets that more playing facilities are not at the hands of the colored devotees of the national game. Often the grounds are crowded to overflowing with boys and men anxious to play, but the playing space will permit only a small proportion to participate. The rest are forced to be spectators instead of participants.

Interplayground games were played during the summer, but no attempt was made to pick a champion. Plans are being laid by this department to form a league for the colored players, with a schedule of games that will last from July to September.

INTERPLAYGROUND BASKET BALL FOR BOYS

The department, in pursuance of its policy of supplying the popular demands of the youthful athletes of the National Capital, formed an interplayground basket ball series for boys during the past fall. The series was one of the most popular of recent playground activities, 14 grounds placing teams in the field. Two leagues were conducted, western and eastern. The winners, Garfield in the eastern section, and Twin Oaks in the western, met in a city championship series of two games, Garfield winning the title by capturing both games, 20 to 15 and 25 to 16.

BOYS' INTERPLAYGROUND TENNIS

The growth of tennis on the playgrounds is limited only by the number of courts available. Interest in the game is increasing each year, and on many occasions during the summer a child is limited to one set a day in order to give all an opportunity to play. The demand for rackets and balls starts with the opening of the grounds, and when all of the equipment and playing space is exhausted a waiting line is formed, which increases hourly until evening, when men, women, and children besiege the director for a chance to play.

One of the big events of the summer was an interplayground tennis tournament for boys. First, each playground having a tennis court played a tournament, the winner being placed in the interplayground tourney. The procedure for conducting the interplayground games was the same followed in all interplayground competition; that is, the city was divided into sections, eastern and western. Carl Rankin, of Garfield, won the eastern section title, and Byrne Curtis, of Iowa Avenue playground, the western. The first set for the city championship was won by Rankin, 7 to 5. The second was deadlocked at 8 all when play was suspended on account of darkness. A

few days later, when play was resumed, Curtis won two straight sets, 6 to 4 and 6 to 3, and thereby won the city championship.

Eight hundred boys competed in the tournament, which lasted from July until September.

ATHLETIC BUTTON TEST FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

During the late spring and summer the interest of the boys and girls is largely centered in the athletic button tests. As soon as the graded school league games are over in May until they start again in the fall the athletic test is one of the main features on the playground. Over 1,387 boys and girls each won either the gold, silver, or bronze button during the past year, the badge which stands for physical efficiency.

BASKET BALL

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BASKET BALL

Outdoor basket ball gives splendid exercise and much joy and is one of the most popular playground activities. Interest in the game has increased to the extent that it has now become a necessity to have more courts for playing purposes.

The elementary school league had teams from 67 schools, over 62 the year before, despite the fact that 5 of the schools had been grouped with others. Nine hundred and sixty-six girls played on the teams, and many others learned the game. A schedule of games was played through in each playground division, and the winning schools were presented with trophies. Team play helps the girl in many ways. It develops her thinking power, gives her poise, and teaches her loyalty and fair play. Basket ball well supervised has not its superior in major playground sports.

Playground division champions

Playground	School
Bloomington	Gage.
Columbia Heights	Monroe.
Garfield Park	Hines.
Georgetown	Jackson.
New York Avenue	Abbot-Twinning.
Plaza	Ludlow.
Rosedale	Pierce.
Virginia Avenue	Lenox.

INTERPLAYGROUND BASKET BALL

The department for the first time conducted an interplayground basket ball series for the girls, and it proved such a success that it will be made an annual event. Fourteen playgrounds were represented in the league by teams of girls 16 years of age and under. The city was divided into the eastern and western section and each section played through a schedule of games. Rosedale was the winner of the eastern division and Iowa Avenue won the western title. A three-game series was arranged to decide the city champions. Rosedale won the first game by the score of 12 to 7. Iowa Avenue

captured the other two, 6 to 3 and 16 to 11, thereby winning the championship of the city.

BASKET BALL ON COLORED GROUNDS

Basket ball is gaining in popularity with the girls on the colored grounds. It has always been a popular sport with the boys, but until the past year the girls have shown only a slight interest in the game. Two of the playgrounds had an elementary school league, and the competitive play taught the girls to be more loyal, the necessity for cooperation, and instilled a better spirit of play. Montgomery School was the champion of the Rose Park division and Douglass-Simmons of the Logan. Each school was presented with a silver cup.

SCHLAG BALL

In the spring when all the boys turn to baseball the girls' principal game is schlag. It has been a leading playground game for so long that it now ranks with the major sports. For the past eight years leagues have been formed from the graded schools and marked interest shown in all playground divisions where the games took place. Team play is a great help to the average girl. It gives her a better understanding of her playmates, teaches her to be unselfish, and in the end to meet defeat as well as victory, and so helps to mold her character.

One thousand and seventy-eight girls played schlag ball on the school teams the past spring. There were 53 teams representing 63 elementary schools, only 1 team being allowed for the grouped schools. The playground divisions and the champion of each for 1924 are as follows:

Playground	School
Bloom ingsdale.....	Langdon.
Columbia Heights.....	Morgan.
Garfield.....	Jefferson.
Georgetown.....	Curtis-Hyde.
New York Avenue.....	Seaton.
Rosedale.....	Kenilworth.
Virginia Avenue.....	Lenox.
Plaza.....	Peabody.

Three of the colored playgrounds had schlag ball leagues formed from the graded schools in their respective divisions. A great deal of interest and enthusiasm was shown by the players. Wilson School was the champion in the Howard division, Logan School in the Logan, and Wormley School in the Rose Park. Each school was presented with a trophy.

TENNIS ON COLORED GROUNDS

Tennis matches were held on each of the colored grounds having tennis courts. There were matches held for boys and other matches held between the girls. In every case crowds of girls and boys gathered to watch the playing, and a great deal of interest in the results was shown by all.

Tennis has been most popular this year. A number of tournaments have been played between the students of Howard University, Freedman's Hospital, and the nurses.

POPULAR PLAYGROUND SPORTS

It is obvious that when playgrounds are open from 9 a. m. to dark during the summer months and 11.45 to dark while school is in session more activities are engaged in than are shown in the foregoing report.

In view of this it is well to mention some of the other sports that the thousands of playground frequenters indulge in daily.

One of the big attractions for both boys and girls is quoits. Each ground boasts of a champion, although in many instances this so-called championship changes hands 10 or 15 times a day. The champion must meet all comers, and the first quoit pitcher to triumph over him acclaims himself the leading quoit player of the ground until he in turn is dethroned.

Tin-can golf, the Washington playground innovation, increases in popularity each year and is rapidly becoming one of the leading minor sports on the playgrounds.

Tether ball, the game that helps one's tennis, is exceedingly popular especially among the small children. The equipment for the game consists of a vertical pole buried in the ground and extending 12 feet above, a piece of string 5 feet long, a tennis ball incased in cloth, and two old tennis rackets covered with canvas. The ball is tied to one end of the string, which is attached to the pole. The object of the game is to see which of the two players can wind the ball around the pole above the black ring drawn about 6 feet above the ground. The players face and drive forward.

The bean-bag board is another attraction claimed by the small children, although older playground enthusiasts derive a great deal of pleasure from the "counting game." Holes, numbered 50, 75, and 100, are cut diagonally on a board which has a back rest on it to hold it in position for the players to toss a bean bag through the holes while about 20 feet away. Each player has three throws and the hole that he places the bag through counts so much in his score. Five hundred is considered the winning number of points.

Mass play, which was introduced on the playgrounds two years ago, has been used to great advantage during the past year. Many of the directors have become proficient mass play demonstrators, and the children look for it as a part of the daily program.

And to "popular playground sports" horseshoe pitching must be added, for this ancient sport has become popular indeed on Washington playgrounds. In the evening after working hours hundreds of men, long past their baseball playing days, gather on the grounds and indulge in "barnyard golf" until darkness calls a halt. Washington playgrounds are recreational centers for all ages, as evinced by the above.

MARBLE TOURNAMENT

Interest in the annual marble tournament grew with the increased number of entrants. More than 2,000 boys took part in the local games, an increase of 500 over last year. The game played

was "ringer," the same as last year, with a few minor changes in the rules. The playground eliminations section games were played, and in this way four section champions were picked to play for the city title on Plaza playground Saturday, May 10. Among the honor guests present were Major Sullivan, chief of police; Chief Watson, fire department; Doctor Fowler, health department; and Representative McLeod, of Michigan, who knuckled down prior to the main attraction and showed that affairs of state have had no material effect on his marble ability. Music was furnished by the Navy band, and the spectators, numbering over a thousand were well entertained during the short waits between games.

Dick Talley, of Bloomingdale playground, won the championship and all that goes with it, including a trip to Atlantic City with expenses paid, a gold wrist watch, tennis racquet, and numerous articles for wear and amusement. The runner-up Homer Drissel, Park View playground, was made as happy as the champion when he was presented with a Collie "pup." Nor were the third and fourth boys sent home empty handed. Each of them received two passes to the circus. A dog and the circus! Who wants to be champion anyway.

Gus Buchholz, proprietor of the Occidental Hotel, gave his annual banquet to the 19 playground champions, and this was the "crowning" success of the tournament, since Alton Darne, 1923 champion, passed his crown over to Dick Talley just before the banquet amid the applause of the banqueters.

The national tournament held in Atlantic City was won by Charles Lenox, of Baltimore. Sixty cities competed in the national games, an increase of 20 over 1923. The local and national tournaments were promoted by the Scripps-Howard News Service, and this organization paid the bill for the 60 champions.

FOLK DANCING

Folk dancing, ring games, singing, and music help make the evening hours attractive ones on the playground. The grown people derive much pleasure from watching the children go through the quaint steps of former days and distant lands. There are folk dances suitable for the smallest tots, such as the Shoemaker's Dance, I See You, Hans and Gretel, and the Carrousel. The older girls prefer the Virginia Reel and the English country dances. A great many of the folk dances are used in the celebration of May Day, spring festivals, and as special features at the lawn parties during the summer months. Peasant costumes are frequently worn to represent the country from which the dance hails.

STORY-TELLING

Story-telling is a big attraction for the smaller children on the playgrounds. In the summer especially, during the hours when it is too warm for active games, the director retreats to the shade with the children and tells them tales of gallant knights and fairy princes, legends of old, and the wonders of nature. The children look forward to this part of the day's program, and stories are often repeated over and over at the demand of the listeners. The

director selects her stories carefully and always chooses one with a moral. A child quite frequently picks out the moral, and the story is discussed by the group. It is very vital that good, wholesome, beautiful stories be given the children, and this fact is impressed upon the director and her assistants. Suitable ones for the little tots are usually told at the kindergarten class. Appropriate patriotic and seasonal stories are selected for special days. The children delight in the wilds of the forest and frequently beg for animal and nature stories while on hikes through the woods. More than 3,000 children listened daily to stories during the past summer months.

OUTDOOR KINDERGARTEN

Outdoor kindergarten classes are held daily as long as the weather permits. These classes are intended for the very small children, but the director has a hard time keeping the older ones away. Every child wants to fashion something out of paper, clay, or worsted, and various and original designs are made. The work is planned and games, songs, and patterns varied each day. The children learn many different types of work, such as clay modeling, crayoning, painting, sewing, paper folding, cut-out work, and the construction of paper furniture, houses, windmills, scenes, etc. On special occasions and anniversaries of national interest appropriate exercises are held, and the completed handwork in some way conveys the meaning of the day. There is much enjoyment for the child in these outdoor classes. He feels the freedom of the open air and much is accomplished that would not be if the child was confined indoors. He gradually learns to concentrate, to use his hands for useful purposes, and to take notice of his fellow playmates. The first selfishness of childhood leaves him and a spirit of fair play is instilled into him at an early age.

FESTIVALS

Festivals are always a great attraction to the children, their parents and friends, and bring out a great many people in the community. Some grounds have a special feature day each week, but the day is usually one for the children who come to the ground daily and is planned with little extra work to the instructors. Larger festivals are given on a more elaborate scale. These festivals, in which a large number take part, help toward social unity and bring about a better understanding between the director and her community.

May Day celebrations are the most festive. In recognition of the Child Health Day, which was May 1, every playground had its pageant and health demonstration on that day. The same program was carried out on the 25 municipal playgrounds. A queen was crowned in the midst of her usual court of flowers, fairies, Maypole dancers, etc. Each group gave a dance, rhythmic or folk, and where it was impossible to have music, either instrumental or a Victrola, the singing dances had been taught. The winding of the Maypole and the procession completed the programs.

National Play Week was the occasion for many entertainments. This week, set aside to instill into the adults and children the very

meaning of play and its results, was celebrated in many unique ways, such as baby shows, doll and pet shows, carnivals, and parties.

The summer months brought forth novelty shows, a circus, bubble parties, lady-come-to-see days, and various contests. Halloween and Christmas festivals were held as usual. The Halloween parties were costume affairs made gay with horns, sirens, confetti, and serpentine. There was carol singing, recitations, and stories at the Christmas celebrations, and the trees were decorated with ornaments and chains made by the children. The presence of Santa Claus was a great delight to all.

The following is the program followed on all Washington playgrounds for Child Health Day:

Municipal playground department child health demonstration, May 1, 1924

4.00 to 4.30: Boys' athletic test (demonstrating some of the athletics in which proficiency is required in order to be eligible for a playground bronze button).

4.40 to 5.30: May Day festival.

1. Procession.
2. March of the May Day girls, Maypole dancers, flowers, etc.
3. Fairy dance and awakening flowers.
4. Dance of the flowers.
5. May Day dance.
6. Crowning of the queen.
7. Maypole dance.

Intermission of five minutes

5.35 to 6.00: Girls' athletics.

Folk dances.

Presentation of athletic-test buttons.

HIKING

During the past summer the children of the Washington playgrounds were given the opportunity of going on "hikes" under the most favorable conditions. Two leaders were employed to conduct the hikes who were trained in nature study and athletics as well as in the handling of children. A site in Rock Creek Park near Pierce's mill was selected as the goal for these walks. Usually the children of two playgrounds were taken each day under the guidance of the special leaders, notice of the hike having been posted several days in advance. A central meeting place was selected within easy walking distance of the Harvard Street entrance to the park, which could be reached by the children from any playground in the city for one car fare. The children were told to bring two car tokens and their lunch. At the entrance to the park "sides were chosen" by the two leaders, the children being divided into two equal groups, and the game of "Indian trails" begun. While one group tarried, the other went ahead and as soon as out of sight began laying trail signs with bent sticks, small stones balanced upon larger ones, and scratches in the earth. The eager trailers, as soon as released by their leader, hurried down the path, all eyes keen to detect the first sign indicating where the trail blazers had left the path for the "wilderness." The trail sometimes led over steep banks or along the edge of the stream, or this

was often crossed on stepping-stones. When the warning sign of crossed sticks, placed at forks in the path, was overlooked the trailing band of now thoroughly enthusiastic "Indians" went astray and had to retrace its steps and pick up the lost trail. At a dense patch of underbrush growing among large bowlders near the appointed end of the trail, a sign reading "find us," meant that the children in the advance group were in hiding near by and must all be rounded up.

By the time the shade-bordered grassy field at Pierce's Mill was reached small stomachs were yearning for the contents of the lunch boxes, and the picnic began. Instruction was given as to how to build a fire and the proper method of putting it out so as to protect both persons and property. When the lunches were finished stories were told until the children were thoroughly rested. Then games were played, races run, and other small contests pulled off until the overflow of youthful energy was harmlessly dissipated. This permitted the quiet examination of plants and rocks, insects, and flowers, and the tiny crawling things to be found under the stones of the stream. All too soon came the signal "home again," but the return hike, via another route, was taken up with enthusiasm, for the rear guard of the morning had its turn at laying trail signs. The route home often led through the Zoological Park, and if time permitted the animals in some of the houses were visited and compared. Practically this same program was followed each day, with new groups of children, until the 60 playgrounds had been covered and every child had the chance to go on a personally conducted hike. Then it became necessary to arrange for a new hike, and something quite different was chosen for the next.

At Kenilworth, D. C., away out in the northeastern part of the city, at the terminus of a single car line, is a series of natural ponds in which have been planted many varieties of rare water lilies. Shaw's Lily Gardens, as this private establishment is known, produces great numbers of cut flowers for the florists' trade of the eastern cities. When the plan of delighting and instructing the children of the city playgrounds by bringing them to the lily gardens was proposed to the owner, Mrs. Helen Fowler, permission was granted, and another series of novel hikes was begun. In order to make it a real hike, the trolley cars were abandoned about three-quarters of a mile from the gardens and the children were guided along a suburban road, also presenting opportunities for nature study. After the gorgeous spectacle of pond after pond of water lilies, white, yellow, pink, red, and blue, were admired, there were countless other water plants to examine and occasionally a frog or tiny water snake to be discovered by sharp eyes. Permission was obtained to use a shady spot for the eating of lunches, and best of all a fire could be lighted where "hot dogs," marshmallows, and other delectables were roasted. The wonderful and unusual spectacle presented by this spot often awed the children into quiet observation and admiration; the banks of the ponds were then lined by rows of bright eyes and ears receptive of nature stories.

Before the hikes with the children began the playground directors and their assistants were taken by the hiking experts on the trips, which enabled them to share in the enthusiasm of the children and to

answer some of the many questions asked them by the amateur naturalists. In some instances the playground director or her assistant accompanied their children on the hike under the direction of the special leader, but usually the hiking experts handled them alone.

It is believed that this form of instruction and recreation is a valuable part of the playground work and could be extended in other directions with profit.

REPORT OF THE REPAIR AND CONSTRUCTION DIVISION

The surfacing, grading, and drainage of our grounds demand constant attention. It is the function of this division to keep the playgrounds in proper condition, to distribute supplies and equipment to playgrounds, to inspect all apparatus and pass upon its safety.

The repair division functions under the supervision of the inspector of playgrounds, who is responsible to the supervisor for the housing and safety of all supplies, equipment, and material purchased, the manufacture of all small equipment, repairing of all apparatus, and the condition of the grounds: construction of tennis courts and basket-ball courts, erection of back stops, shelter houses, and pavilions.

The playground storehouse, which is the headquarters of the repair and construction division, is situated at 1062 Wisconsin Avenue NW. This building contains a carpenter shop, blacksmith shop, small machine shop, paint shop, tool room, storage room, and office.

Supplies are purchased in bulk and delivered to the storehouse, from where they are distributed weekly to the various playgrounds.

The number of men carried on the labor roll varies during the year. They are under the supervision of the inspector of playgrounds and directly responsible to the inspector for all work, material, and tools.

The expense of the repair and construction division is prorated among the various grounds.

PLAYGROUND SWIMMING POOLS

Pools are located on the following playgrounds: Georgetown, Rosedale, and Howard (colored). In charge of each is a head life guard, who is assisted by a teacher of swimming, an attendant, and a key boy. Each pool will accommodate 100 bathers at one time. The pools are of the open-air type, 28 feet wide by 75 feet long, with a sloping depth of $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet to $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet. Each pool holds about 96,000 gallons of water, which is supplied from the city main. The water is filtered, and the pools are so constructed that an overflow of water is always going off while they are in use. The water was frequently tested by the health authorities, and the pools have been kept in the most sanitary condition.

Pools were open the 15th of June and closed the 15th of September, with record attendance. Free swimming instruction was given on all pools. Water carnivals and swimming meets were held for boys and girls.

Attendance on Rosedale, 16,429; Georgetown, 18,671; Howard, 18,504.

MUNICIPAL POOLS.

The municipal pools opened the day after the closing of the public schools, in June, 1923.

The total number of people using these pools was 39,393; and although the attendance on the hottest days numbered as high as 1,800 there were no serious accidents during the four months.

The free swimming classes proved very successful. Of the 6,000 in attendance on these classes fully two-thirds learned to swim across the pools and to dive into the deep pool off the spring board.

Age was no drawback—children 6 years old courageously negotiated the dead man's float and learned to jump into deep water and swim out; and several women and men between 60 and 70 have been taught to swim.

The facilities for handling the swimming public, especially children, was ridiculously inadequate. It is recommended that new swimming facilities be provided in different parts of the city.

Several years ago the superintendent, after a careful inspection of swimming facilities, recommended that small pools rather than large ones or bathing beaches be constructed for the reason that they are much easier to keep clean. The example of Baltimore's 3-acre pools or lakes as against Philadelphia's 40 or more small pools can be cited. The former city can not empty its pools but once a season, whereas the latter empties and scrubs every night. The difference in bacteriological content of the water as taken from the health office reports of these two cities prove that it is impossible to keep the large pools clean and quite possible to keep the small ones below the danger point.

	Classes			Attendance	
	Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls
1923			1923		
June	339	572	June	2,173	2,815
July	1,407	2,431	July	7,899	11,175
August	763	1,196	August	6,389	5,369
September	172	283	September	2,199	1,433
Total	2,682	4,292	Total	18,659	20,734
Grand total	6,974		Grand total	39,393	

CONCLUSIONS

There is no factor more potent in determining the character of the future citizen than play. The leisure problem is a distinct social problem comparable in importance to public education. The greatest lessons in life are learned in organized play—obedience, cooperation, teamwork, respect for the rights of others—all desirable qualities in the coming citizen.

Since the park playgrounds are far more attractive to the child than any other, it is fair to conclude that every park should have a playground for children.

Playgrounds should be within walking distance of every girl and boy, as most children can not afford to pay car fare. There must be

supervision over these playgrounds. Play is almost the only method of physical development for city children, and we must provide for it if we would have the children strong and law-abiding.

One of the most encouraging things to us is that the churches are expressing an interest in recreation and the use of the leisure time of the children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That every church or Sunday school interested become responsible for the salary of one director on the ground nearest their own church to do a social field work impossible otherwise.

That more Federal reservations be available for supervised play.

That additional provision be made for swimming. Not only more outdoor swimming pools for summer use, but indoor swimming should be available for all. The needs of the colored people should be given immediate consideration.

That shelter houses or open-air halls be built on all grounds now in operation.

That playgrounds be opened and lighted during the evening.

That the shops of the elementary schools be opened in vacations, that the children attending the playgrounds near by may have elementary woodwork. The repairing of broken toys and furniture would be good occupational play.

That school kitchens be opened in summer vacation and near by playground children be given cooking lessons as an occupational recreation.

That branch libraries be opened on all playgrounds.

That a part of the reservation known as Judiciary Square be transferred by Congress to the control of the District Commissioners to be used for playground purposes. The exact location of the section desired is that part of the square north from E Street, extending to F Street, between Fourth and Fifth Streets, NW.

That the law affecting recreation in the District of Columbia, as follows—

It shall not be lawful for any person or persons to set up or fly any kite, or set up and fly any fire balloon or parachute in or upon or over any street, avenue, alley, open space, public inclosure, or square within the limits of the cities of Washington or Georgetown, under a penalty of not more than \$10 for each and every such offense—

be annulled.

That public-spirited citizens be reminded that there is no gift that can be made to the city of greater use and enjoyment, with more lasting honor to the name of the donor, than the gift of land for a public playground.

In submitting this report I desire to acknowledge the cordial support of the department of health, the splendid cooperation of the police department, the courtesy extended by the department of buildings and grounds, the interest taken in our work by the community, the help given us from many who have rendered willing service, and my appreciation of the enthusiastic and earnest efforts of the directors of playgrounds. To the newspapers of the District I am grateful for giving space in which to bring our plans and achievements before the public.

I have found it a joy to be a factor in this great work of trying to make the playgrounds the best social expression of the neighborhood.

Respectfully submitted.

SUSIE ROOT RHODES,
Supervisor of Playgrounds.





